

Over the last 40 years, she has also mentored hundreds of members of our staff and helped guide them in their careers. Thanks in part to her leadership with my office, a vast majority of our current and former permanent staff members got their start in our office as interns or fellows and grew into talented and instrumental staffers. Joni showed them how they could make a real difference working in government. Her dedication to our staff has helped make me a more effective legislator, and I am forever grateful for that.

Mr. Speaker, Joni LaVerne Ivey retires from her service to the United States House of Representatives and to my office this week. This will be a hard-earned and well-deserved retirement, and I know that she will remain as active in Newport News and around Hampton Roads as she is now, but perhaps a little less restrained now that she no longer has to worry about me or our office.

I know Joni has never sought public recognition for her hard work, but on behalf of our entire current and former staff and the citizens of the Third Congressional District of Virginia, I thank her for her dedicated and selfless service to our community, our Commonwealth, and our Nation.

STRENGTHENING THE PEACE CORPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, at the young age of 23, Nick Castle knew he had a higher calling. So directly following his graduation, he headed overseas to China to teach English, volunteering in the Peace Corps.

Sadly, Nick became seriously ill after becoming an ambassador abroad. He was the victim of an inefficient, underequipped, and unresponsive Peace Corps-led medical team in China.

After he reported that he was ill, he was prescribed a broad antibiotic. Nick quickly began to experience drastic weight loss, but he was reassured he was okay. As the weeks progressed, he was confined to his bed, too ill to even stand up. But his doctor never recommended that he go to the hospital.

After experiencing dangerously low blood pressure, Nick was finally sent to a hospital. As the ambulance made its way to him, it got lost on the winding roads in the remote area of China. Before the ambulance could get Nick to the hospital, he stopped breathing. Nick died a few weeks later in early 2013.

A 2014 Peace Corps Inspector General report found that Nick was the victim of medical negligence. "Failures and delays in treatment" were exposed, ultimately leading to Nick's death. Investigations revealed that the Peace Corps medical team misdiagnosed his illness.

This heartbreaking death of a young man serving our country and the world

could have been avoided had the Peace Corps staff been properly trained, equipped, and had a responsive team.

Unfortunately, Nick's case is representative of a broader problem: Peace Corps volunteers struggle to access quality medical treatment when they are abroad in remote areas of the world. And when they return to America, then they face a red-taped, bureaucratic nightmare.

They are covered by the Peace Corps for 3 months while they wait on the Department of Labor to determine that their illnesses or injuries are service-related. But the Department often takes much longer than 3 months to make that determination, forcing those Peace Corps volunteers to pay out of pocket for costly medical expenses. When attempting to get medical coverage through the Department of Labor, many are faced with costly personal expenses.

So, Mr. Speaker, Congressman KENNEDY and I have sponsored H.R. 2259, the Sam Farr Peace Corps Enhancement Act. Sam Farr was a Peace Corps volunteer and a Member of Congress. This act seeks to improve and strengthen the health, safety, and well-being of current and returning Peace Corps volunteers. It requires that Peace Corps volunteers have access to a qualified Peace Corps medical officer and medical facilities while they are at posts overseas. And when those volunteers return home, it extends their Peace Corps coverage for up to 6 months while they wait on the Department of Labor to determine coverage. It enhances access to health care for returning Peace Corps volunteers as well, and it expands and improves provisions of the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act, enhancing the ability to assist and protect volunteers that have experienced sexual assault, among other issues, while in lands across the seas.

Mr. Speaker, Peace Corps volunteers are America's angels abroad. They are some of the best that we have. They are the spirit of humanitarian assistance. They work in remote areas of the world helping others—areas of the world that many Americans can't find on a map.

So America must make sure to take care of these amazing people when they serve in lands far away so that there are no more deaths like Nick Castle's. And that is just the way it is.

RECOGNIZING PENN MEDICINE'S MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible actions of a group of individuals in my community.

On April 3, 2017, an amazing physician and amazing mother, Amy Reed, experienced what should have been a

catastrophic cardiac arrest at Penn Medicine's community radiology center in Yardley, Pennsylvania. Yet, because of the amazing efforts of a series of professionals, Amy survived this event.

I would like to recognize the following individuals:

The advanced life support paramedics from the Yardley-Newtown area, Mr. Mark Horner and Mr. Chris Adams;

St. Mary Medical Center's cardiac surgeon, Dr. Veluz, and the entire cardiac surgery, anesthesia, and perfusion team at the St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, Pennsylvania;

The PennSTAR trauma critical care air rescue helicopter crew, Ms. Shiloh Kramer, Mr. John Goddard, and Mr. George Huey;

Cardiac critical care nurses, Ms. Coleen Nicolosi, Ms. Darian Parkinson, and Ms. Laura Glorioso-Moyer, who took intensive care of Dr. Reed in her initial resuscitation.

Thereafter, a corps of highly specialized surgical critical care nurses played an intensive role in her ongoing recovery. Mr. David Alfano, Ms. Carrie Brewster, Ms. Rachael Coyle, Ms. Catherine DeLaurentis, Mr. Michael Duca, Ms. Christina Felix, Ms. Cortney Johnson, Ms. Anita McAlee, Ms. Erin McCormick, Mr. Sebastian Romagnano, Ms. Lina Sivadasan, Ms. Christine Steffon, Ms. Joann Vernon, Ms. Gina Vizzarri, Ms. Meghan Welsh, and Ms. Danielle Wright all are to be commended for their professionalism and extreme skill in recovering Dr. Reed and giving her a second chance at life.

After 5 days in a coma, Amy has emerged and is neurologically intact. The actions of these professionals led to Amy's life being saved. Their conduct can only be characterized as heroic.

Amy is loved by family and many friends in Bucks County, and by many thousands more across the United States for her role as a champion and a spokeswoman for women's health and patient safety. And because of the efforts of the medical professionals who saved her life, I have the opportunity to continue working with Amy to advance her crucial mission.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 31 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.